

# North Carolina Air National Guard

## TGIF News

(The Guard Is Family)

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### Message from Family Readiness Office

*By Kathleen Flaherty*

Our first goal is to communicate with our members and families, and to pass on important and timely information. The TGIF News will now be published twice a month. Our second goal is keeping our Unit Family Support Groups trained and informed. A heads up, **Saturday April 5th at 2 pm** in the multi Purpose Room, Hqs Building, we will be conducting a training workshop for commanders, unit rep, and lead volunteers. Some subjects that we will be covering: Unit Family Readiness Funds, Duties and Responsibilities of Unit Family Supports Groups, and Mobilization Briefings. We have received numerous guidance letters from NGB and have put together binders for each unit representative. Lastly over the past UTAs, you may have noticed a number of units have received their mandatory Annual Family Readiness Briefing. No that doesn't mean those unit are being activated. At these briefings each member/family receives the updated Personnel & Readiness Guide and current new Tricare Handbook. Both of the books along with the briefings gave our members/families valuable contact information to better prepare them in the event they should be activated. Chaplain Shackleford partnered with Family Readiness and gave a Stress management Briefing, benefiting not only the service members, but the families and especially the children. If your unit has not received these briefings, I highly recommend scheduling them.

### New TRICARE mail order pharmacy opens March 1

**By Rudi Williams—American Forces Press Service**

More than 400,000 military pharmacy mail order customers were switched March 1, 2003, to a new TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy program. Express Scripts Inc. will provide services under the new TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy program. Medication that requires refrigeration is shipped through priority mail or a courier service, such as FedEx, the pharmacist said. "That's one reason we don't send medications that require refrigeration to APO and FPO addresses overseas," he noted. TRICARE beneficiaries living and working overseas can use the mail order pharmacy if they have an APO, FPO or a U.S. embassy address. But the prescription must be written by a provider licensed to practice in the United States.

Those eligible to use the old mail order program or the retail benefit are eligible to use the new TRICARE mail order program. New customers have to register for the program. Information is provided through the TRICARE service centers and military treatment facilities pharmacy. The usual delivery time for medication is five to seven days. The easiest way for patients to ensure they don't run out of their medication is to have the provider write for up to a 90-day supply with up to three refills. The beneficiary can request a refill once 75 percent of the medication has been used. He said all medication is screened for potential drug interactions or therapeutic overlaps that could produce an adverse drug reaction. He said patients' complete beneficiary profiles are entered into the Pharmacy Data Transition Service, which enhances patient safety by keeping their medication records current, on file and readily available. The new contract saves taxpayers' dollars because it calls for purchasing drug products at federal prices. Best federal prices are at least 24 percent below average commercial wholesale prices Davies estimated.

For more information, including a complete section on the co-pay structure, visit the TRICARE Web site at [www.tricare.osd.mil](http://www.tricare.osd.mil). Reservists can check the site for details of their benefits under the program. TRICARE beneficiaries can now preregister for TMOP services at Express Scripts Inc., [https://member.express-scripts.com/esi\\_member/user\\_login\\_dod](https://member.express-scripts.com/esi_member/user_login_dod). By preregistering, you'll expedite the processing of your future prescription orders.

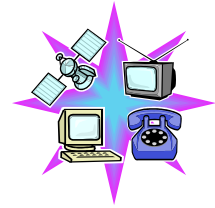
## TRICARE Help E-Mail Service (THEMS) Newsletter

TRICARE Help Newsletter - This newsletter is a publication of the TRICARE Help E-mail Service (THEMS), operated by the US Army Medical Command in San Antonio, Texas.

What is THEMS? - THEMS is a free e-mail service that provides quick answers to TRICARE questions. Clinical issues should be referred to your primary care provider.

The e-mail address is: TRICARE\_help@amedd.army.mil

Copies of the TRICARE Help Newsletters are available online 24/7 in MS Word and text format at <ftp://thems:newsletter@139.161.156.101/>



## Military Life Insurance Premiums Reduced

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will reduce Service members' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) premiums, beginning in July 2003. Ninety-eight percent of active duty and 96 percent of eligible reservists hold SGLI policies. The new monthly rate will be 6.5 cents for every \$1,000 of coverage, about 19 percent less than the current 8 cents. Monthly premiums for the maximum coverage of \$250,000 will fall to \$16.25 from the current \$20. In addition to the basic SGLI, family coverage is available for spouses and children of service members holding SGLI policies. Spouses pay age-based premiums for up to \$100,000 coverage, while children receive \$10,000 of free coverage. The reduction for spousal policies will vary among age groups, with the largest decline - 42 percent - affecting those 35 to 39. The reductions will save service members about \$96 million annually in basic SGLI premiums and about \$42 million in family policy premiums. The reductions do not affect Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) rates. For more information about VA administered life insurance programs visit <http://www.insurance.va.gov/>

## Blue Star Service Banners Are A Military Family Tradition

Have you noticed banners with blue or gold stars hanging in windows? Have you wondered what these banners represented? Well, these are blue star service banners, and they have a long history. In 1917, during WWI, an Army Captain in Ohio designed the banner with two stars. The star symbolized his children's service to their country. Families throughout the country soon adopted it. It was displayed so that the "world should know of those who give so much for liberty. The dearest thing in all the world to a father and mother, their children." During WWII, the Department of War issued manufacturing specifications and guidelines for the display of the banner. The banner hanging in their neighbors' windows show their pride in their country and their children. Anyone with a child serving in the Armed Forces, including the Guard and Reserve may display this banner. Each blue star represents a child. There are banners with up to five stars. If you see a gold star on the banner, this signifies that their child has died in service to our country. The American Legion is promoting the renewal of this wonderful tradition. You can contact your local Legion or visit their website at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) for purchase or more information.



## FREE books/papers and FREE mailing for military personnel

<http://aupress.maxwell.af.mil>

This site offers **FREE** books/papers and **FREE** mailing for military personnel. Limit 10 at a time. Very informative and useful for research or just reading material.



Time  
for a  
good book

## Commissary Privilege Cards

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) is responsible for providing the commissary benefit, and is making this information available as a service to our patrons. Only the U.S. Congress and Department of Defense have the authority to determine the rules and regulations that govern the commissary benefit, and to determine who is entitled to commissary privileges. Furthermore, DeCA has no responsibility whatsoever for printing, requisitioning, preparing or issuing Commissary Privilege Cards (CPC).

### **Who is eligible?**

Current Guard/Reserve  
Guard/Reserve retirees  
Immediate family members

### **How often can I shop the commissary and what documentation do I need to exercise my commissary privilege?**

Non-active duty Guard/Reserve members are authorized 24 commissary shopping days per calendar year. To shop the commissary, authorized Guard/Reserve members must present:

Valid DoD Guard/Reserve ID card  
Current Year Commissary Privilege Card (CPC)  
Authorized family members must show:  
Valid DoD Reserve/Family Member ID card  
Sponsor's Current Year CPC

**NOTE:** CPCs are issued one per sponsor, not one per each member of a family. Multiple visits to the same commissary on the same day, or to different commissaries on the same day count as only one of the 24 commissary shopping days.

Guard/Reserve ordered to short term (less than 30 days) active duty (AD), active duty for training (ADT), or annual training (AT) are authorized unlimited privileges during the inclusive dates of such duty. Guard/Reserve and their authorized dependents must show a valid ID and copy of the Active Duty orders. The CPC need not be presented or stamped when the appropriate orders are shown.

Guard/Reserve ordered to long-term (more than 30 days) Active Duty are issued Active Duty ID cards. These personnel and family members have unlimited commissary privileges during the period of Active Duty, documented only by valid ID-no orders or CPC required.

### **When do CPCs expire?**

The CPC expires on 31 December of the year of issue. Unused visits do not carry over to the next year.

### **How do I get my Commissary Privilege Card?**

CPCs are mailed to Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) and Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA), and retired Guard/Reserve in December for use during the next calendar year. CPCs for Troop Program Unit (TPU) are mailed to the Regional Support Commands for distribution through units. Check with your unit administrator, regional support team or use one of the phone numbers listed below:

Army Reserve 1-800-318-5298 (ask for CPC information)

Air Force Reserve 1-800-525-0102 (ext. 71228)

Navy Reserve 1-800 535-2699 (press 1, then press 3)

Marine Corps Reserve 1-800-255-5082 (ext. 3395)

Marine Corps Reserve - Ret. (703) 784-9306 or 784-9307

Coast Guard Reserve 1-800-772- 8724

Here are some web sites with additional information on CPC eligibility:

[www.2xcitizen.usar.army.mil/soldierservices/pay/commcards.asp](http://www.2xcitizen.usar.army.mil/soldierservices/pay/commcards.asp)

[www.nrpweb.nola.navy.mil/commissary.htm](http://www.nrpweb.nola.navy.mil/commissary.htm)

Activated Guard and Reserve personnel and their family members can enjoy unlimited shopping in the commissary by showing their ID card and active duty orders. During active duty periods, they do not need the CPC to shop.

## Pet Options for Deploying Troops

Army News Service reports that deploying soldiers with pets have an option for pet care: pet fostering. Stay-at-home patriots are opening their homes to the pets of departing soldiers who have no one else to care for their animals. When the soldier returns, he or she gets to restart life with a beloved family member. The trick is getting soldiers and foster-caregivers together and making sure that the parties (human and animal) are a good fit for each other, says Maj. Steven D. Osborn of U.S. Army Veterinary Command. Osborn recommends beginning the search locally with installation veterinary treatment facilities (VTFs), which may be familiar with local services. But in the event a VTF does not know about any fostering service, the soldier should check next with local humane societies, animal-control facilities and breed clubs. If that does not turn up a suitable program, then cast a wider net regionally or even nationally. Of course, a more distant foster home in-

volves costs for transportation of the animal, but this is a small price for owners who love their pets and feel a sense of responsibility towards them. Several Websites provide general advice on fostering and/or with brokering services to bring pet owners and foster-caregivers together:

NetPets at <http://www.netpets.org/>  
Feline Rescue at <http://www.felinerescue.net/> (click on "Operation Noble Foster" box)

The Humane Society of the U.S. at <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11822>

4MilitaryFamilies at <http://www.4militaryfamilies.com/pets.htm>.

## Caution To Deployed Service Members and Their Families—Information Protection Warning

**The following information was forwarded by Chief James Sims. While the article was provided by Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), this guidance complies with DOD's intent and caution to service members and their families. Suggest wide dissemination to members about to be deployed as well as family members.**

Some of the things you can do to help protect yourself, unit members and their dependents are:

- **First**, NEVER give out the names of personnel deploying with you or from your unit or any DoD unit...even if it is only their first name. This information is NOT for public release.
- **Second**, NEVER give out specific dates of troop movements. This includes standard AEF rotations and contingencies.
- **Third**, NEVER provide a copy of official deployment orders to anyone requiring proof of your spouse's deployment, even in exchange for services with the best of intentions.

The AF has also identified other potential vulnerabilities regarding protection of our personnel, including:

- Web sites that ask for overseas mailing addresses
- Publicly available sign-up sheets for phone cards or other goods to be sent overseas
- Well-meaning local community efforts to send homemade goods or materials anonymously to APO addresses for military members In addition, DoD postal officials, concerned about the vulnerability of the military mail system to attack, recently suspended all 'any service member' mail. "Those programs, according to DoD officials, were eliminated because they have created an avenue to introduce biological, chemical or explosive materials into the military mail system, putting people in danger. At the same time, the programs left the sources of such material virtually untraceable." - AF News, 30 Jan 03. "In the past, many well-intended programs worked well, but today the same programs open us up to attacks from unknown sources. We have to take as many safeguards as we can to protect our mail system." - Dir, AF Postal Policy, Jan 03.

If someone does approach you (or your spouse) about when you are leaving, who is going, or addresses where they can send goods and materials to our service members (even if they have the best of intentions--including schools and church groups) the best thing to do is redirect them to service organizations such as the Red Cross, The Air Force Aid Society, USO, etc. <http://www.redcross.org/>, <http://www.afas.org/>, <http://www.uso.org/>>)

Family members who have your specific address can still mail packages to their family member. However, family members should **NEVER** give this mailing address to neighbors or community groups in their local communities.

## TROOP SUPPORT MAIL POLICY STRESSED

### IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 2003

To bolster force protection, the general public is urged not to send unsolicited mail, care packages or donations to service members forward deployed unless you are a family member, loved one or personal friend.

On Oct. 30, 2002, the Department of Defense (DoD) suspended the "Operation Dear Abby" and "Any Servicemember" mail programs due to force protection concerns. Although these programs provide an excellent means of support to friends and loved ones stationed overseas, they also provide an avenue to introduce hazardous substances or materials into the mail system from unknown sources. Unsolicited mail, packages and donations from organizations and individuals also compete for limited airlift space used to transport supplies, war-fighting materiel and mail from family and loved ones.

Recently, DoD has become aware of organizations and individuals who continue to support some form of the "Any Servicemember" program by using the names and addresses of individual servicemembers and unit addresses. These programs are usually supported by well-intentioned, thoughtful and patriotic groups who are simply unaware of the new risks facing deployed military forces. Some individuals and groups publicize the names and addresses of

service members, ships or units on Web sites, with good intentions. The result, however, is a potential danger to the troops they wish to support.

DoD cannot support creative and well-intentioned efforts that defeat force protection measures, but can instead recommend alternatives to mail and donation programs. To show support to troops overseas, the following are recommended:

\* Log on to the following Web sites to show support, to include greeting cards, virtual Thank You cards and calling card donations to help troops stay in contact with loved ones:

<[http://www.defendamerica.mil/support\\_troops.html](http://www.defendamerica.mil/support_troops.html)>

<<http://www.usocares.org/home.htm>>

<<http://www.army.mil/operations/iraq/faq.html>>

Visit Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals and nursing homes. Volunteer your services to honor veterans who served in past conflicts.

Mail from family members and loved ones has always been encouraged and the military mail system will continue to work hard to get that mail to service members overseas. [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2003/b03222003\\_bt139-03.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2003/b03222003_bt139-03.html)

## Garnishment assistance for Guard and Reserves

By Zanell Osowski

Each week, the country's demands on Guard and Reserve military members increase as more units are activated for the possibility of war with Iraq, to support anti-terrorist efforts and the tension with North Korea. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service Directorate of Garnishment Operations has been working with the Federal Office of Child Support to address issues relating to activated Reservists and the payment of child support. The Director of Garnishment Operations, Rod Winn, has identified one scenario that is a concern for a significant number of activated Reservists.

"A civilian (who is a reservist) who works for a private company is called up or activated. That reservist has a child support order requiring payment of child support based on the income the member makes working at the private company. Upon activation, the reservist experiences a reduction in the amount of income he makes. If the reservist does not ask for a review and downward modification of the child support obligation from the child support agency, the member can incur a large child support arrearage while serving in the reserves," said Winn.

**Guidelines:** To address this concern, the DFAS Garnishment Operations and The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement have developed the following guidelines for reservists and ask that they contact the state child support agency regarding a review of or questions concerning their child support obligation.

Activated reservists should contact their state child support agency regarding a review of their child support obligation if:

- Their income level has changed, or will change, they may be eligible for the agency to review and adjust the amount of your support order
- Their support payments are being withheld from their paycheck, the state agency can ensure the withholding is transferred to DFAS on a timely basis to prevent or minimize missed payments. Also, ask your current employer to notify the state agency of your deployment and to provide all needed information.
- They have a child support hearing scheduled, the agency can try to move it up or let the court or hearing officer know your service status.
- Their child support order includes health care coverage for their child (medical support), their child is eligible for the military health coverage TRICARE. The agency may be able to assist in signing the child up with DEERS.

**This issue can have serious consequences for the Reserve military member and dependent children relying on the support. All reservists, with support obligations, are urged to take time and review the garnishment guidelines.**

## FORSCOM RDO Casualty Public Affairs Guidance/Statement

The RDC and RDO personnel should remind family members, through Family Readiness Group channels, that media requests for interviews should be coordinated through the Public Affairs Officer. All personnel should be reminded that only the commander or PAO is the designated release authority on casualty information to the media. Additionally, No one should act on, respond to or repeat rumors. Finally, initial media reports are often incomplete or wrong.

If family members are approached by the media following early or unconfirmed reports of combat casualties, or in cases where deaths have occurred but next of kin notification is not complete, recommend they the following statement:

"I have (have not) heard rumors, but until casualties are confirmed and next of kin have been properly notified, I cannot respond to your questions. At this time, the

thoughts and prayers of all the members of the (unit) Family Readiness Group are constantly with all the families and all the soldiers, sailor, airmen and marines engaged in Operation Iraqi Freedom. I recommend contacting the post public affairs officer for up to date information."

## Privacy Information—www.google.com

Take a look at the note below, if you go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and type in your telephone number it will actually pull up directions to your house. There is a way to have your number removed.

Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) then type in your phone number (separated by hyphens, including area code) and click on Google Search. If your phone number is listed it will show your name and address and give you two map options. Yahoo and MapQuest. See how accurate the map is to your home. **VERY SCARY!!!**

Any person wishing to discover the physical location of a phone number, be it a

home or business address, could use this feature to locate a physical street address, and receive directions on how to get there from anywhere in the country. In the age of the internet communication we all know the dangers of this - for adults and **CHILDREN!**

Google has made available an option that will allow anyone to REMOVE their telephone number from the database that is linked to the mapping feature.

You will first need to check if your number is listed in this manner by at-

tempting a search-entering your full telephone number separated by dashes (e.g. 555-555-5555). If the number appears in the mapping database, **an icon resembling a telephone** will appear next to the first or second entry on the results page. Clicking on this icon will take you to a page containing a description of the service, and a link to request your number be removed from the database.

**So far unlisted numbers and cell phone numbers, do not show up.**

## Resources for Parents, Teachers, and Family Support Professionals in Times of War—Department of Defense, Mar 20, 2003

[www.cyfernet.org](http://www.cyfernet.org) provides an excellent new resource for youth and family professionals working with:

- 1) Military families on and near installations and bases;
- 2) Military families that have left installations and moved back with their families;
- 3) Families of Military Reserves and National Guard members who have been de-

ployed;  
4) All families dealing with issues related to war and terrorism.

This site was developed and the resources have been reviewed by University and Extension faculty from universities across the country. Click on "Hot Topic" on the CYFERnet page.

*EXTENSION/4-H SUPPORT FOR MILITARY YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMS*  
<http://www.reeusda.gov/4h/cyfar/military.htm>

CYFAR provides contact information for both Military and Extension youth and family professionals and programs. Please share this information with your youth and family professionals.



**[www.cyfernet.org](http://www.cyfernet.org) provides an excellent new resource for youth and family professionals**



## The USO: Delivering a Touch of Home

by Tracey Edgerly Meloni

It's the American way to support our troops abroad with letters and packages from home. News photos of sprawling tent cities in the harsh desert and stories of two-hour-long lines for PX snack food make one thing clear: troops stationed in the Middle East will sure welcome love and little luxuries from home. However, conditions today require us to change our thinking about mailing off goodies. Heightened security precautions prevent non-family members from sending mail to the Middle East, so civilians cannot send letters and packages directly to "Any Soldier Member" anymore. But the USO can do it for us, through "Operation: USO Care Package."

It's been called a welcome touch of home, a safe port in a storm, and your own front door away from home. The non-profit United Services Organization, or USO, has been the serviceman's and woman's friend for generations. Chartered in 1941 and originally organized by six private organizations -- the Salvation Army, the YMCA, the YWCA, the National Catholic Community Service, the National Jewish Welfare Board, and the Traveler's Aid Association -- the USO began with a challenge from FDR: support the on-leave recreation needs of Armed Forces members. The rest, as anyone who can say "Bob Hope" knows, is history.

I've been a USO fan all my life. My Dad tells warm tales about the USO's bringing relief from loneliness and routine even before he was deployed in WWII. He remembers discovering "a great break from barracks life in Fayetteville, N.C.," when he was young Pvt. Edgerly far from home. "At my first dance, I was flanked by six southern belles, USO volunteers, who marveled at my Boston accent. My fondness for the USO grew from that day."

When I was 6 and we were stationed in Bordeaux, Dad added USO officer to his duties. He took me with him to pick up retired baseball player Al Schack, who did a routine for the troops. During Vietnam, my husband sent enthusiastic letters describing terrific USO shows, while I helped organize volunteers at home.

The USO is dynamic, ever evolving not only to support the morale and welfare of overseas troops, but also to meet changing needs -- most recently the new mail restrictions. Current rules ensure that priority attention is given to family mail, and those of us with family members deployed are given clear details about where, when, and what to send. But not all service members have family back home, and many Americans without family deployed want to help. The USO puts givers and recipients together. Operation: Care Package is possible because of three American traditions: volunteers, individual financial contributions, and corporate support.

If you want to contribute to a friend's family members' package but aren't sure what to send, the USO has a "Service Members Wish List" to help in the selection of items most requested. Both DoD and the USO suggest finding out what your

deployed relative wants most, or cannot find. There's also a list of taboos, such as alcohol, tobacco, and inappropriate reading material. "The Middle East region is deeply conservative," warns one former serviceman deployed in the '91 Gulf War, "it's not a good idea to send copies of risqué magazines, lingerie catalogs, or swimsuit calendars." In a sobering reminder, he adds that it's also not a good idea to send anything scented, such as cologne, deodorant, or shampoo, because "if the enemy can smell you, he can find you."

"What should we send?"

A spokesman for Operation: Care Package points out that DoD is gender neutral; wish list items should suit women as well as men.

### Travel-Size Personal Items

Disposable Razors  
Toothbrushes  
Toothpaste  
Tissues  
Shampoo/Conditioner  
Shower Gel  
Sunscreen  
Baby Wipes  
Sunglasses  
Hand Lotion  
Lip Balm  
Cotton Swabs  
Sewing Kits



**Operation USO Care Package**

### Miscellaneous Items

Playing Cards  
Crossword Puzzle Books  
Pre-paid Global Calling Cards  
Stationery and Journals  
Small Footballs and Softballs  
Individually Wrapped Snack Items

### Supporting Our Troops

Regardless of gender, and whether or not you're gathering goodies for a family care package, consider sending your support through the USO's Operation: Care Package. Packages contain an assortment of items from the above wish list, as well as a personal greeting transcribed onto postcards by USO volunteers.

For more information on how you can help, contact the USO toll-free at 866-USO-GIVE, or online at [www.uso.org](http://www.uso.org).

*NORTH CAROLINA AIR NATIONAL GUARD  
TGIF NEWS  
(THE GUARD IS FAMILY)*

## Family Readiness Air Guard Expanded Executive Council

### **Fisk Outwater—Chairman**

**Kathleen Flaherty**

**Terry Henderson**

**Janice Richardson**

**Deborah Dunlap**

**Martha Pasour**

**Sarah Spivey**

Family Readiness office telephone number

- 1-800-354-6943 ext. 4949

Cell Phone: 980-721-4019

- The fastest way to get in touch with FR is now through the cell phone, someone will answer or get back in touch with you as quickly as possible.

Emergency contact calls:

- Pager: 1-800-250-4181

*Uniting Our Air Guard  
One Family at a Time*



**NCANG  
Family Readiness**

5225 Morris Field Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28208

Phone: 1-800-354-6943 Ext 4949  
Cell Phone: 980.721.4019

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
**WWW.NCCHAR.ANG.AF.MIL**



## **Family Readiness**

### **Charter**

Develop a program to provide information, on-going education, and assistance to families, members, and leadership aimed at preparing military members and their families for National Guard Military Life.

### **Mission**

Educate, Support, Assist, Communicate, Collaborate, and Sustain.